



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

M

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/650,723	08/29/2003	Raymond J. Chekal	MAY009-202	7717
7590	06/27/2005		EXAMINER	
DIEDERIKS & WHITELAW, PLC 12471 Dillingham Square, #301 Woodbridge, VA 22192				WILKENS, JANET MARIE
		ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER
		3637		

DATE MAILED: 06/27/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/650,723	CHEKAL ET AL.
	Examiner Janet M. Wilkens	Art Unit 3637

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ . |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8/29/03 & 3/5/04</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ . |

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. For claim 1, 2 and 19, the phrase "said at least one guide element being adapted to engage the at least one guide element" is confusing between both the first compartment and mullion bar include a guide element. For claims 4 and 5, it is unclear which guide element is being referred to in line 1. Also, for claims 17 and 18, it is unclear which "at least one guide element" is being referred to.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuwabara et al in view You. Kuwabara teaches a refrigerator (Fig. 10) comprising: a cabinet shell including a first compartment and a second compartment, first and second doors (84,85) closing off the first compartment, guide elements (86) mounted in the first compartment, a mullion bar (89) pivotally

mounted to the first door, guide elements (99) on upper and lower portions of the mullion bar, and hinges (97). For claim 19, Kuwabara fails to teach a mullion bar with plural members and hinge members with first and second nested hinge elements. You teaches a refrigerator (Fig. 1) having a mullion bar (7) made of plural members (70,72), the lower member including a hinge member (82,712) with plural nested elements (82 located inside 712) and an adjustable guide element (723). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the mullion bar assembly of Kuwabara by using an alternate type of hinge member/guide element, i.e. using the lower member with hinge member/ guide element of You in place of the hinge members/guide elements presently used, to provide a tighter sealing means (because of the adjustable guide element assemblies) between the compartment and doors/mullion bar.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1 and 2 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action. (For claims 1 and 2, the allowable subject matter being the mullion bar and door assembly of a refrigerator which includes first and second hinge members, each having a first element with a first cam member and a hinge pin defining a hinge axis and a second hinge element including a second cam member and a hinge pin receiver. The first and second elements connected to a respective one of the door and mullion bar; with the hinge pin extending into the

Art Unit: 3637

hinge pin receiver and the first and second cam members being nested together with the help of a spring biasing them together. When a guide element on the mullion bar is engaged with a guide element on the refrigerator, movement of the door will cause rotating and translating motions between the cam members against the biasing force of the spring and forced rotation of the mullion bar about the hinge axis relative to the door will occur.)

Claims 3-18 and 20-23 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

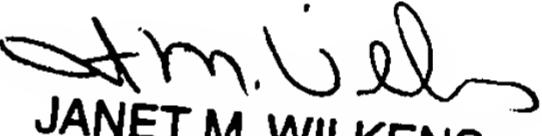
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Janet M. Wilkens whose telephone number is (571) 272-6869. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lanna Mai can be reached on (571) 272-6867. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 3637

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Wilkens
June 22, 2005


JANET M. WILKENS
PRIMARY EXAMINER
